

BUILDING AMARAVATI: BETWEEN WESTERN URBAN DREAMS AND INDIAN REALITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Since independence in 1947, India has built many planned cities. These include four new capital cities built from scratch: Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Gandhinagar, and Naya Raipur, i.e., in addition to refugee, lesser administrative and industrial towns. These capital cities were built because of the creation of new provinces (later states). Chandigarh was created as the capital of Haryana and Punjab in response to losing its capital Lahore to Pakistan, when India and Pakistan were separated at independence. While Bhubaneswar was built as Cuttack, the capital of Orissa, as the previous capital from where the British administered Orissa Province, was vulnerable to frequent flooding and suffered from spatial constraints. Gandhinagar and Naya Raipur were built as capitals of Gujarat and Chattisgarh as they were created anew separating from the states of Bombay and Madhya Pradesh. This paper focuses on India's fifth and the latest state capital, Amaravati which is still being built, after Andhra Pradesh lost its capital Hyderabad due to the separation of Telangana.

The idea of building a new capital city for Andhra from scratch is not new in India. In fact, the government has been fascinated in doing so for decades since their independence, as they can lay their dreamed vision of the world on an empty land. The Chief Minister (CM) of bifurcated Andhra Pradesh, Nara Chandrababu Naidu is one of the dreamers who wanted the city to be "modern-Indian," a vision that is similar to Jawaharlal Nehru's when Chandigarh was planned. Nehru was mesmerized by modern, scientific and rebelled against old traditions and old towns that held people in "ignorance" and "superstition." He wanted to urbanize the villages (Kalia 1987), as villages and bullock carts were not a picture of the essential joys of life to him (Prakash 2002). While similar to Nehru in ideals, Chandrababu Naidu's most frequent frame of reference for Amaravati is Singapore. Quoted as "the people's capital of Andhra Pradesh," (APCRDA, 2018) Amaravati is envisioned to be a world-class city which would increase the prominence of Andhra Pradesh in the world.

Driven by the desire to create a modern image like in Amaravati, the leaders who created Chandigarh hired foreign planners, acquired people's land, evicted people, transformed agricultural land, and awaited for architecture to fit into the place. Architects like Charles Correa hope that after hundred years Chandigarh would fit seamlessly into the Punjabi ethos (Prakash 2012). This is what is happening in Amaravati too, but in a new context, at a different time. Hence the question: Is Amaravati following the same trajectory of Chandigarh? Should Andhra residents also wait for hundred or more years to fit Amaravati into Andhra Pradesh? Who determines the urban character of Amaravati? Were social and cultural aspects of the citizens considered in its planning?

At an interview with a freelance journalist Rollo Romig (2017, pp.17), Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said the following about the planning of Amaravati: "I'm not thinking [of] today and tomorrow [but] thousands of years [from now], for future generations. I want to stretch my capacity beyond my limitations." Le Corbusier who had the similar thought process while designing for Chandigarh also stated that India is jumping into the second era of mechanization, instead of sinking into the groupings and errors of the first era, but he would give India the architecture of modern times and fulfill the mission (Prakash 2012). Yet, like David Harvey argues, "Good design becomes meaningless tautology if we consider that man will be reshaped to fit in whatever environment we create" (Harvey 1973, Pp.46). Indeed, one could easily observe the "Indianization" of Chandigarh. The process also raises some significant questions about the planning and development of Amaravati and its future.

The master plan which is more of a design rather than a plan pays more attention to its aesthetics, visual aspects but not much to the social and cultural aspects of its residence. With the thought that humans last only for few decades but buildings last for centuries, planners and architects tend to give more importance to those concrete blocks over people's livelihoods (Kalia 1987). Hence the major goal of this paper is to examine a potential flaw in

urban policy that does not meet the local standard of living and people's aspirations. Also, to highlight the impact of foreign planning ideas thus examining the gap between western dreams of dominant actors who have power and the Indian lifestyles of ordinary people and their livelihoods. As a result, inspiring the planners to rethink the city plan and change it to meet citizen's aspirations for the city and their own spaces within it.

This project examines the designs and plans of Amaravati from the people's standpoint responding to the question: Whether the urban dreams of Amaravati are supported by the realities or are they forced onto the reality? Following Nihal Perera's (2016) work on *People's Spaces*, by "people" this paper refers to ordinary citizens who have no power to create the space as the state or capital, but commonly expected to live in spaces provided by these institutions. However, as Perera demonstrates, people cannot live in abstract spaces conceived by these actors but have to create through negotiation. Their own lived spaces that support their daily activities and cultural practices are also negotiated in the process. This study on Amaravati was carried out through the observation of people's activities and their spaces, photographic and audio documentation, informal discussions, interviews, ethnographies of people, archival research of plans, and interviews with planners. However, to protect the identity of the farmers pseudo names were used in this paper. Also, I use frameworks as close as possible to those employed by people, but within the larger intellectual frameworks I developed during my graduate studies, to interpret my own observations.

This paper will first describe and explain the dreams of Naidu and his authorities, starting from the factors that were considered in the selection of the location and site, followed with an explanation of the master plan done by a Singaporean planning firm, Surbana Jurong Pvt. Ltd. Further explaining the design concepts and planning done by an architecture firm led by the famous British architect Norman Foster who was selected as the

designer of Amaravati's 900-acre core capitol complex. With reference to the inability of Chandigarh and Gandhinagar design to support Indian lifestyle, the object of this paper is to examine the Amaravati plan from local people's perspectives. The study focuses on the measures taken by the government to implement these designs explained in the later chapter.

Documenting my findings, I would highlight that new designs and advanced construction techniques do not by themselves make the dream of planning and building urban environments come true; they certainly do not make the planned city successful. It is the upliftment of people's lives that makes it successful. As it employs people's views to critique the plan, this paper will suggest ways to combine people's aspirations into urban dreams.

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

India's experience of planned development of state capitals began immediately after independence. The historical context for the formation of Amaravati is also long, the political struggles for a language-based state beginning in the early 1950s. This chapter will provide these two contexts for the study in the reverse order, first exploring the origin of the idea of a separate state and its political materialization. In so doing, the chapter will conduct a literature review for the study.

POLITICAL CONSTRUCTION OF AMARAVATI:

The dream of Amravati began with the linguistic-nationalist dream of creating a Telugu speaking state in 1952. This desire for a linguistic-nationalist state is shared by many other linguistic groups in India. However, the struggle for Telangana began long before it was established, perhaps when the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan did not want it to be annexed to India at independence. He even made a complaint to the United Nations. Later, after the three decades (1969-2014) of struggle, Telangana state was established in 2014. This thesis focuses on the planning and creation of the new capital of Andhra Pradesh after losing its former capital to the new state.

When India became independent from the British Empire in 1947, it inherited the administrative boundaries from British India. These borders were results of historical and political events leading up to colonialism and to facilitate the strategic needs of the colonial administration of British India. The post-colonial national government felt that the reorganization of state borders was necessary; one of their proposals was to reorganize states based on languages. Even before the end of colonialism, in 1920, the members of Indian National Congress adopted the linguistic reorganization of Indian states as one of its political goals. In 1927, the Congress declared that it was committed to the "redistribution of

provinces on a linguistic basis” and reaffirmed this stance several times. It was also included in the election manifesto for the first national elections of independent India in 1947. However, soon after independence the Congress-led government became concerned that the states formed solely on a linguistic basis might be unsuitable and might even pose a risk to the national unity.

On 17 June 1948, Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constitutional Assembly set up the Dhar Commission (Lit: Linguistic Provinces Commission) to recommend whether the states should be reorganized on linguistics basis. On 10 December 1948, the commission proposed "the formation of provinces [based] exclusively or even mainly linguistic considerations is not in the larger interests of the Indian nation" (Kumar 1976, pp. 70-71). Soon after the report was published, the Congress, at its Jaipur session, set up a committee, called the JVP committee, to study the recommendations of the Dhar Commission. The name follows its participants, mainly Jawaharlal Nehru (Prime Minister of India) and Vallabhbhai Patel (Deputy Prime Minister of India); it also included the President of the Congress, Pattabhi Sitaramayya. In its report dated 1 April 1949, the Committee stated that the time was not suitable for the formation of new provinces but added: "if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, we, as democrats, must submit to it, but subject to certain limitations in regard to the good of India as a whole". (in Windmiller 1954, Pp.300)

The struggle for a Telugu state continued: the demand for the creation of a Telugu-majority state out of areas belonging to Madras State had become powerful by 1952. Potti Sreeramulu, one of the activists demanding the formation of a Telugu-majority state, began a fast for the same cause and died on 16 December 1952. Subsequently, the government of India announced that it would go ahead with the creation of a new state. This was the first language-based state (Windmiller 1954, Pp.293) and this sparked agitation all over the country, with various linguistic groups demanding separate states. This is precisely what the

Congress feared. To reorganize the states, the national government set up the State Reorganization Commission (SRC) under the chairmanship of Fazl Ali, a former Supreme Court judge, in December 1953.

In another move, the commission, due to public demand, recommended the downsizing of Hyderabad State, merging Marathi speaking region in Hyderabad with Bombay and Kannada speaking region with Mysore state. According to paragraph 386 of the SRC report

After taking all these factors into consideration we have come to the conclusion that it will be in the interests of Andhra as well as Telangana, if for the present, the Telangana area is to constitute into a separate state, which may be known as the Hyderabad State with provision for its unification with Andhra after the general elections likely to be held in or about 1961 if by a two thirds majority the legislature of the residuary Hyderabad State expresses itself in favor of such unification.

Hyderabad Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief along with 80% of other congress delegates elected in 1955 opposed the merger. Thus, the Home Minister Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant decided to merge Andhra State and Telangana to form Andhra State on 1 November 1956 with the help of a gentleman's agreement. The agreement provided safeguards from discrimination against Telangana by the government of Andhra Pradesh. The violations of this agreement are cited as one of the reasons for formation of separate state for Telangana.

Two political conflicts marked the period of 1969 to 1973; these were carried out by Jai Telangana and Jai Andhra movements. Social tensions arose due to the influx of people to Telangana mainly Hyderabad from the coastal Andhra region. Protests started with a hunger strike by a student from Khammam District demanding the implementation of safeguards (gentlemen agreement) promised at the creation of Andhra Pradesh. The movement that staged the protests slowly manifested into a demand for a separate Telangana. In 1973, a political settlement was reached with the Government of India with a six-point formula agreeing upon by the leaders of the two regions to prevent any recurrence of such conflicts in the future.

In 1997, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state unit passed a resolution seeking to separate Telangana. In 2000, members of the Congress Party in the legislative assembly from the Telangana region who are for the separation of Telangana state formed the Telangana Congress Legislators Forum and submitted a memorandum to the president of the Congress Party, Sonia Gandhi, requesting her support for the Telangana state. In April 2001, a new political party named Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), led by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao, was formed with the single-point agenda of creating a separate Telangana state with Hyderabad as its capital.

In April 2002, L. K. Advani, Union Home Minister, wrote a letter to the Member of Parliament (MP) of Lok Sabha (the national house of representatives), A. Narendra rejecting a proposal to create Telangana state. In the next national elections in 2004, Congress Party formed a coalition government with TRS; In February 2009, the state government declared that it had no objection, in principle, to the formation of a separate Telangana and that the time had come to move forward decisively on this issue. On 29 November 2009, TRS president Rao started a fast-unto-death, demanding the Congress Party to introduce a bill in the national Parliament establish the Telangana state.

On 9 December 2009, Union Minister of Home Affairs P. Chidambaram announced that the Indian government would start the process of forming a separate Telangana state, pending the introduction and passage of a separation resolution in the Andhra Pradesh assembly. On 3 February, the government appointed a five-member committee headed by Justice Sri Krishna to consider the issue; it reported six solutions. The committee proposed to keep the state united by guaranteeing the socio-economic development and political empowerment of Telangana region through the creation of a statutorily empowered Telangana Regional Council. The Alternative was to bifurcate the state into Telangana and Seemandhra per existing boundaries, with Hyderabad as the capital of Telangana and

Seemandhra with a new capital. After several agitations, on 20 February 2014, the Telangana bill was passed by Rajya Sabha in Delhi, with the support of Congress, TRS and BJP.

Thus, Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated per the *Andhra Pradesh Re-Organization Act 2014 of 1 March 2014*. Through the Act, the Indian Parliament defined the boundaries of the two states and divided the assets and liabilities. Per the Act, Hyderabad became the joint capital of the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for a period of not more than 10 years after which it becomes the capital of (new) Telangana state. In April 2015, Amaravati was announced as the new capital of bifurcated Andhra Pradesh.

THE LITERARY STUDY AND CONCEPTUAL TOOLS:

The planned capitals of India: Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Gandhinagar, and Naya Raipur are the predecessors of Amaravati. Literature on them provide the basic literary-intellectual background to planned cities in India, Amaravati in particular. Chandigarh and Gandhinagar occupy the extremes of being most influenced by European and Indian ideas respectfully. Amaravati has certainly been influenced by these two projects. The critics provide us much information and concepts to learn how new cities were conceived in India. While the subject is well debated, Ravi Kalia's books on each of these cities provide a common platform to compare and contrast the literature on them. In this section, literature on each city from different sources is discussed in chronological order.

Making of Chandigarh:

The author of *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier - The struggle for modernity in Post-Colonial India*, Vikramaditya Prakash (2002) was born and grew up in Chandigarh as the son of one of nine Indian architects who assisted in designing the city. He shares his intimate knowledge on the "artificial city" by bringing in stories of the planners, architects and bureaucrats vying

over the colonial past and the symbolic future of India. He too is an architect; so, he provides insights into design aspects. Basing on Le Corbusier's sketch books, Prakash interprets his flow of ideas in making Chandigarh and gives a detailed explanation on the conceptualization of the buildings that made the capitol complex, although it is impossible to verify whether Le Corbusier even meant the same as Prakash understood and explained in his book.

Whereas, Ravi Kalia (1987) provides a broad understanding of Chandigarh with a detailed picture of its political history, planning and architecture, drawing on a multitude of sources and interviews he conducted, providing insights into most of the actors involved in the planning process, in *Chandigarh - In Search of Identity*. He identifies Chandigarh as the most visible example among new cities, designed to fulfill deep rooted psychological needs and to meet pressing political exigencies India was facing at independence. However, Kalia (1987) points out that no attention was paid to the fact that an entirely man-made environment is a unique product of a particular society and culture. It threatens to transform the experience of the existing culture without first creating necessary preconditions for such transformation (Kalia 1987).

The major aspect that was considered by the decision makers was the potential to replace the material and psychological loss of Lahore which had been a hub of commercial and cultural activities of the Punjabis before West Punjab was assigned to Pakistan at the “partitioning of India.” Shimla, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Ambala were the five cities that were considered as possible alternatives for the new capital initially. If inadequate facilities and poor infrastructure precluded the conversion of an existing city into the new capital of East Punjab, the lobbying by strong political pressure groups to support claims of different cities made the selection impossible (Kalia 1987).

According to Kalia (1987), Indecisions over the site for new capital would have lingered longer had not the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, who championed the

project and personally intervened. Economic limitations of the state government and Nehru's interest in making the new capital a representation of modern India assured an active role for the central government. As Prakash (2002) says, it would not have been possible without Nehru's personal interest and financial assistance from the central government. In contrast, In regard to Amaravati, there is neither Prime Minister's interest nor financial support anywhere near what was received by Chandigarh, further discussed in chapter four.

In consultation with the government of India, the government of East Punjab selected the current Chandigarh site in March 1948. The differential in costs for land acquisition, its safe distance from Pakistan and the prospect of building a modern town to represent India, justified the location for Chandigarh. The decision received the enthusiastic support of Nehru who said on his first visit to Chandigarh: "The site chosen is free from the existing encumbrances of the old towns and old traditions. Let it be the first large expression of our creative genius flowering on our newly earned freedom" (Kalia 1987, Pp.12).

The most expedient and cost-effective solution was to adopt an existing city as the new capital and simply build new legislative buildings (Prakash,2002, Pp.6). Thinking that humans last for few years, but buildings last for centuries, they gave more importance to those concrete blocks over people's livelihoods (Kalia,1987; Pg. 88). Kalia (1987) gives a detailed description of the controversies starting from the selection of site which can be very well related to Amaravati, discussed in further chapters.

The two phases of the Chandigarh project required about 28,000 acres of land in fifty-eight villages with a population of 21,000 people made up of 6,228 families. Of the total 28,000 acres, 22,000 were cultivated land. Its acquisition affected 6,807 landholders, out of which 6,215 possessed less than 10 acres of land. Only 16 landholders possessed more than 50 acres (Kalia 1987). This led to the formation of Anti - Rajdhani Committee (Anti- Capital Committee) which blamed the government for creating another refugee problem (in addition

to the one caused by the partitioning). Other Congress leaders too opposed the site but for their own reasons, especially for not selecting their own towns for the capital.

Adding to this controversy was the selection of architects to plan and design Chandigarh. The person who emerged as the first claimant to Chandigarh's modernity was a senior Indian bureaucrat, A. L. Fletcher, "Officer on Special Duty" to the government of Punjab assigned solely to deal with the new capital. While in July 1948, P.L. Verma, the chief engineer of the Public Works Department (the agency responsible for the construction of the city) proposes an international competition for the design of Chandigarh, Fletcher totally disagrees. Instead, he proposes that "We must be guided by the views of those who have had such experience with the building of new towns and follow the practice evolved in countries that have built or building towns." (Prakash 2002, Pp. 35)

In favor to him, the Punjab government officials were inclined to visit Europe to find a suitable architect-planner for Chandigarh, but Nehru rejected the request. According to Kalia, Nehru had a practical side to him: "The average American or English town planner will probably not know the social background of India. He will therefore, be inclined to plan something which might suit England or America but not so much India." (Kalia, 1987; pp. 26) Pointing to New Delhi as an example, he concluded, it is attractive in a way, but most inconvenient and most un-Indian. This made the Punjab government eventually contract with Albert Mayer, an American who had been building in Uttar Pradesh.

Trained as an architect and town planner, Mayer recognized that his assignment of planning new villages in India would involve new sets of factors unlike the towns in the west. He was honest in admitting his lack of experience and grounding in India as his major shortcoming. The centerpiece of Mayer's master plan was to organize the city into residential neighborhood unit called the "super block;" that were further divided into three equal blocks. Each super block accommodated the basic amenities of a neighborhood such as

market, primary, and secondary schools, hospital, meeting hall, etc. He was planning to develop the overall urban form by the multiplication of such units rather than from a single dominant formal concept. His main goal in Chandigarh was to create a peaceful city, not where complications counteracted by other complications.

Mayer contracted an American architect Matthew Nowicki to visualize the architecture. The intention of Nowicki, in all his residential block designs, was to blend modern architectural solutions with the Indian way of life including temples and bazaars. These bazaars although modern in form, contained Indian features such as shops with the provision to sit on the floor and separate area for street hawkers. Also, for building material, Nowicki concluded that “brick may prove to be the cheapest medium,” a conclusion that is proven to be true in India today (Kalia,1987; pp.68). However, one will never know to what extent of Indian in feeling and function Mayer-Nowicki’s design would eventually have been, as Nowicki dies in an airplane crash on 31st August 1950.

After the death of Nowicki of the Mayer team, the Franco/Swiss architect Le Corbusier was hired to execute the Mayer’s plan. However, he quickly and swiftly took over Albert Mayer’s plan and transformed it to his own sense of order and clarity (Prakash 2002, Pp.45). He searched for a new language, a language that could be used to deal with the challenges of the industrial age. He wanted to produce an architecture that would be “Indian” of the second half of the twentieth century. The sentiment is quite similar to that of Mayer, but with a difference as Mayer looked into the India’s past, especially bustling bazaars and closely-knit village communities. While Le Corbusier looked at India through his own interpretative lens with all the paraphernalia of industrialization. Thinking that humans last for few years, but buildings last for centuries, they gave more importance to those concrete blocks over people’s livelihoods (Kalia,1987) which is again being followed in Amaravati.

Kalia (1987) compares the designs of Mayer and Le Corbusier saying: Mayer placed greater emphasis on the socio-economic factors of the city, its potential for future growth, the peculiarities of Indian traffic, the social customs of the people and other related issues. Similar to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu ideology in Amaravati, Le Corbusier remained concerned with the physical attributes of the city and the monumentality of the building designs. Restricting him further from introducing his ideas in Chandigarh was the non-industrial character of India and his own unfamiliarity with the Indian lifestyle.

In just a decade since the inception of the city considerable unplanned growth mushroomed within the restricted periphery zone of Chandigarh. Due to the overcrowding of the city, squatter population, slums, and tenements had sprung up in the outskirts of the city. With the increase in population many unauthorized shops and street hawkers which is common in India had emerged in Chandigarh; and dwellings meant for one family had one family in each room (Kalia, 1987). To which Le Corbusier called the situation “a crisis of authority”. Although, after many efforts and decades of work it was proven that Chandigarh was a designed city but not a planned city.

The artificiality of the manmade environment of Chandigarh became subjected to natural influences of the local socio-political culture and tradition. The city region is dotted with new satellite towns, which were never included in the master plan of Chandigarh. The reason for this has been mainly the urbanization of rural areas surrounding Chandigarh. Alarmed by the unrestrained urban growth, both within the city and on the periphery of the Chandigarh, a coordination committee was formed in 1975 to prepare a regional plan for Chandigarh and for the urban areas falling within its zone of influence.

According to Kalia's evidence, cities in South Asia do not have a modernizing influence but their visible “modern” or supposedly modern attributes are mere manifestations of “middle- and upper-class lifestyles” (Kalia, 1987; Pg.: 148). The assumptions of the

Chandigarh master plan were based on the consumption patterns of the middle classes of industrialized countries in the West and the expectation that these opportunities would expand to that middle level and that the lower classes would be induced to climb to that level.

While Kalia (1987) presents his evidence, Vikram Aditya Prakash (2002) shares his own experience in his book.

Every time I went on the capitol esplanade as a student, there was always someone from Kansal, the village just north, bathing a buffalo, washing clothes, playing cricket or just passing through on a bicycle or scooter. The legislators and judges never bothered to walk onto the esplanade, since they always came and went by car from the lower level. As a consequence, in spite of the security and the official sanctity of the place, the esplanade has become open territory for all sorts of unofficial activities. Even the security men have strung up lines to dry their laundry. (Prakash 2002, Pp.146)

Although people reside, work and play in buildings, their behavior is not determined by the buildings, but by the economic, cultural and social relationships with them (Harvey, 1973). According to Prakash's own experience, the innumerable architects who pass through Chandigarh generally preferred to wait until the village people pass on, so they can get a clear shot of the buildings. They try to edit the laundry picture from frame, unsuccessfully and then complain about the callous Indian government's disrespect for the great French/Swiss architect's creations (Prakash 2002).

Architects like Charles Correa hopes that Chandigarh would fit seamlessly into Punjab after hundred years as a famous old Indian town; similar to those of Fatehpur-Sikri, Patrick Geddes, Golconda, Mandu which were once considered as foreign elements but now as the integral part of the Indian landscape and acknowledging Le Corbusier as the greatest Indian architect (in Prakash, 2002). While the author Ravi Kalia concludes that new design and construction themselves do not make the dream of planning and building better urban environments come true (Kalia 1987). It's the people who live in it and their diverse social, cultural and economic relationships which shape the space around them. Yet our knowledge

of these spaces is minimal, which are leading us to these [un]planned cities like Chandigarh and continuing to the Andhra Pradesh's capital Amaravati.

Gandhinagar: Capital of Gujarat:

If Chandigarh is Le Corbusier's city, Bhubaneswar bears the German Otto Koenigsberger's signature. Gujarat's capital Gandhinagar made a strong rival to Corbusier's planning of Chandigarh with its purely indigenous effort in planning and development by Indians.

The Building of Gandhinagar by Prakash Madhusudan Apte (2012) and *Gandhinagar: Building National Identity in Post-Colonial India* by Ravi Kalia (2004) are the two major sources of literature on the construction of Gandhinagar, the new capital of Gujarat, India, in 1960. Both authors describe and explain the building of Gandhinagar. However, they organize the information from two different perspectives and say two different stories. Many a times they are complementary, but there are significant differences.

Apte, (2012) the only surviving town planner of Gandhinagar, gives an inside view of the planning approach, the thought processes, concepts and technical details that went into the planning and design of the city. While Kalia (2004) explains the geography and political history of the project by recounting India's progression through pre-colonial, British, modern and postmodern theory and practice and analyzes the roots of the chief planner Hargovind Kalidas Mewada's thoughts. The work of Apte and Kalia are influenced by their own disciplines, urban planning and history.

Kalia (2004) does not elaborate on the planning process or the considerations behind the planning of Gandhinagar and there is no evaluation of the basic concepts of the plan itself. He focuses on the project and its politics. The book largely relies on secondary data from people, in Apte's words on "who were mere kids when Gandhinagar was being built, though they occupy important positions in the present government" (Apte 2012, Pp.8). It

seems that Apte refers to leading architects of India such as Charles Correa and Bala krishna Doshi whom Kalia extensively interviewed.

According to Kalia (2004), Mewada preferred the simplified forms of modernism, but also recognised that cities are places of memory of the collective past. In the context of centralised control inherent in new city development, many national governments in the twentieth-century have looked up to the modernist ideal of planned cities as a solution for urban congestion, slowing rural depopulation and restoring regional balance. In both colonial and postcolonial India, the urban debate and architectural discourse was never particularly local; it was energetically universal. Universal in Kalia can be interpreted as Western. The shape of this ideal that Nehru had provided for India, through his involvement in Chandigarh, was fervently embraced by India's political leaders. This was a central ideal that was variously interpreted in the plans and building of Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

In Gujarat, the young visionary Doshi tried to visualize the future of Indian cities in the image of the new world provided by Louis Kahn and his new interpretation of the modern skyscraper. In addition to the influence of Le Corbusier that India received via Chandigarh, Ahmedabad where Doshi lives was also highly influenced by Kahn.

According to Kalia (2004), Mewada strongly felt that the ultimate success of the capital would depend not only on careful city planning and its architectural form but also on the creation of the public spaces and civic areas where people could assemble to enjoy the visual pleasures of the buildings adding vitality and the attractiveness of the city (Kalia 2004). The sentiment was very similar to one expressed by Kahn. In a sense, for Kalia, most of planning of Gandhinagar comes from Kahn through Mewada. For Apte (2012), this is a misconception in Kalia's book.

Under the United Nations program of technical cooperation, Gujarat government arranged Mewada to receive international assistance from the British academic Vernon Z.

Newcombe. Newcombe suggested that Indian architects and planners in the Public Works Department travel to Europe to study new technologies and ideas in order to design their cities and homes in India (Kalia 2004). The reason for this debate on the conflict between Indian and Western thought systems abated recently because of the growing number of Indians travelling overseas from the working and middle class. Even though they use the traditional Indian adornments as part of their aesthetics, they return home demanding the comforts of western homes and cities. The Indian diaspora in Western countries, particularly in North America had been instrumental in influencing extended family members in India in a quiet but deep way to aspire to many of the same creature comforts and new technologies that are available in the west (Kalia 2004).

Similar to the site of Amaravati which is located near the banks of Krishna River, the 5738 hectare site of Gandhinagar is also situated on the banks of the Sabarmati River. Unlike Amaravati, the soil was mostly sandy loam suitable for construction. In order to stop erosion of land along the river, the forest department reclaimed about 1400 acres of *Kotar* (ravine) lands on both banks of Sabarmati River on which approximately 1,41,155 seedlings of trees were planted (Apte 2012). According to Prakash Apte (2012), in building Gandhinagar, which is almost 10,000 acres, only 5 trees were uprooted. All of these were mango fruit trees which were trimmed to a height of 8 feet and removed retaining much of the root bulb with manual labour and transplanted them. A special nursery was established, and plants were provided at no cost to citizens (Apte 2012). The planning of Gandhinagar gave the common man very little chance to complain about, except about the lack of urban environment present in Ahmedabad.

The grouping of residential buildings in Gandhinagar have the resemblance of *pol*s, clusters of housing units around courtyards on narrow lanes common in cities in Gujarat. Grouped along a street, the houses open to courtyards used for social inter-course between

people of all ages; it is also as a play area for children. Eight categories of residential plots, ranging from a minimum of 135 sq.mt. to a maximum of 1600 sq. mt. were made available for people in general. Each residential community has a hierarchy of about four categories of private plots and government quarters to achieve a balanced social and economic structure. Also, for each category of house for government employees, at least two to three alternative designs were developed to obtain a more varied pattern in the government housing area. Buildings for schools were located within the sector to provide visual relief and break monotony of residential buildings all along the road. After planning the government cluster Apte conducted a social survey of the neighborhood and community relationships in the cluster to find gratifying results. He found that the feeling of neighborliness and interpersonal relationships was much better than in the Western concept of grouping houses around a square open space which was followed in Chandigarh (Apte 2012).

Apte (2012) critiques Chandigarh's town plan as static, devoid of any Indian character in the design of residential areas. Unlike Gandhinagar, he comments that each level of government employees was separately grouped and the hierarchy is accentuated more in line with the British colonial settlements rather than a representation of true democracy that India aspired. He confirms that Gandhinagar was intentionally not meant to be a masterpiece that carry the personal stamp of the architect. The Gandhinagar planners tried to follow Gujarat's own traditions, cultural heritage and the teachings of Gandhi but adopt the state of art building materials and technology. In concluding his comparison between these two capital cities, he says that Chandigarh represents the building of national identity in Post-colonial India, while Gandhinagar stands as the true identity of India (Apte 2012).

AMARAVATI: URBAN DREAMS

The definition of development in Asian cities for a large majority of leaders and planners is catching up with the West or its modified versions by adapting to globalization or creating a global city. For these leaders, the early adoption of new trends, practices, and models in the West, or a proxy such as Singapore or Shanghai, increases the competitiveness of their city. (Perera and Tang; 2013). At present, this is the perception of Andhra Pradesh leaders and planners towards the capital city Amaravati.

The master brain behind the planning and development of Amaravati is the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu, who earlier played a major role in the development of Hyderabad before bifurcation. Although it is quoted as the people's capital, the way the city is being planned and built shows little interest in the social, cultural needs of the people. The plan focuses on industrial and infrastructure growth, providing favorable business climate, excellent infrastructure, good law and order and cordial industrial relations, with the aim of positioning the state as the most preferred destination for investors. These projects are explicitly profit-oriented and commodified in nature, with the corporate sector playing a powerful role in their conceptualization, planning, development and governance (Ramachandraiah, 2016).

Naidu was born on 20 April 1950 at Naravaripalle, Chittoor district, in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh to an agricultural family. He thus knows about the life in the field of agriculture. Unfortunately, his priorities to the field of farming are minimal compared to others. He served as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh from 1994 to 2004. It is during this period that he drew his ambitious plans for Hyderabad, turning it into an information technology hub. It was during his tenure, that several IT companies opened offices in what came to be known as Cyberabad. While he was praised by sections of the national and

international press, critics accused him for concentrating development exclusively on Hyderabad, ignoring rural areas of the state and farmers' issues.

This mistake of his, developing Hyderabad exclusively leaving other parts of Andhra Pradesh behind, left him with a major challenge after bifurcation. As Hyderabad, i.e., the major source of revenue for Andhra Pradesh, went to Telangana, the downsized Andhra Pradesh had to figure out how to generate enough revenue and survive as an independent state. Not to repeat the same mistake, the government has decided to go for decentralized development of the state with three mega cities and upgrade fourteen cities in Andhra Pradesh into smart cities along with the development of the capital, Amaravati. Though the fourteen smart cities get the plans of dedicated industrial park and infrastructure, Amaravati's function as a capital is unique. The state government has decided to establish a green field capital city as a livable, environmentally sustainable and people's capital. This chapter investigates the city's claims to be of the people's from the ordinary citizen's stand point and to highlight the impact of foreign planning ideas in the Indian cities.

According to Susantha Goonatilake (1984, Pp.107), "independence did not result in new theoretical orientations but in a shift towards broader dependence on new centers of dominance." In the field of planning and architecture, the post-colonial leaders having an objective to construct a modern nation continue to depend on the ideas that originated from the West during the colonial era. Post-independence, this is the ideology that formed as a base for the planning of Chandigarh.

Every step taken by the government in proposing and developing Amaravati reminds us of the planning of Chandigarh. Starting from the selection of the site, the government had to face many similar hardships as Chandigarh from strong political pressure groups who were pulling the new capital to their cities. However, a committee of five "core" experts led by chairman Sivaramakrishnan, former Secretary in Urban Development at the national level,

was appointed by the government to study various alternatives regarding the new capital. After considerable indecision, the potential location of the new capital was narrowed down to three distinct regions of Uttarandhra consisting of Visakhapatnam region, Rayalaseema arc and Kalahasti-Nadikudi spine in addition to the Vijayawada-Guntur region.

In India, urbanization has meant “something larger and more abstract than what could be found in existing cities” (Perera and Tang; 2013, Pp.5). Naidu with similar ideology, did not want a city’s existing infrastructure to impede his vision of building a “world-class city”. This made him choose the region between Vijayawada-Guntur that has more open agricultural lands (non-built up land) for the construction of capital city exempting the existing settlements. By using agricultural land to build a capital, he gave least importance to farming and people’s livelihoods. Apart from this, the factors that favored the choice of location for new capital city included access to everyone, centrality to the state’s geography, rail, road and airways connectivity, proximity to ports like Kakinada, Machilipatnam, availability of water, existing infrastructure to initiate the development, proximity to urban areas like

Vijayawada and Guntur, apart from its cultural and political history of more than 2000 years.

Vastu (a traditional Hindu system of architecture) played an important role in site selection based on its topography, position of

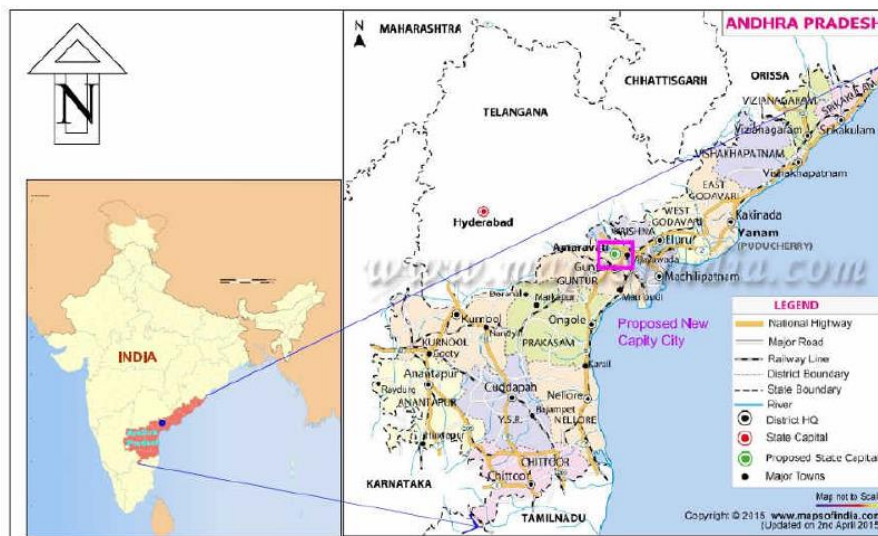


Figure 1: Location of Andhra Pradesh in India
Source: Jain et al., 2018

nearby hills and water bodies. Considering each of these elements, the proposed capital

Amaravati City of Andhra Pradesh (figure:1) falls under Guntur district between Vijayawada and Guntur cities on the upstream of Prakasam Barrage on the Krishna River. The 217.23 Sq. Kms site is home to 97,960 people living in 25 villages (as per Primary Census Abstract Tables Census 2011), located within three mandals: Thullur, Tadepalli and Mangalagiri. Though the physical spaces of these existing villages are considered in the concept plan, their social and cultural practices are not taken into account. Planners have not only refused to acknowledge and incorporate the pervasive transformations and underlying collective behaviors into decision-making but also continue to believe in planning's efficacy only as a rationally applicable technology (Vidyarthi, 2013). In other words, planners are driven by optimism that they can create new forces of change with mere physical structures and restrictive legislation.

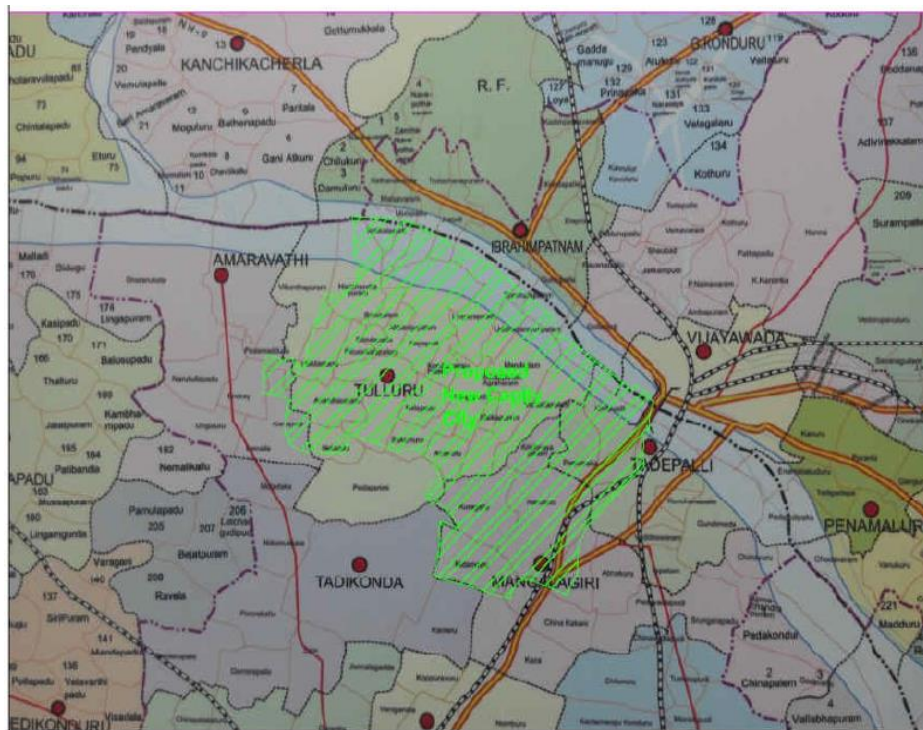


Figure 2: Location of proposed capital city
Source: Jain et al., 2018

The name Amaravati is derived from the ancient temple town which is also located in the same region. However, it is not integrated into the general master plan, leaving it on the outskirts of the proposed new capital city (figure:2). The

ancient city including nearby locations and Dharanikota were the capital of the Satavahana dynasty that held sway over much of the Deccan region between 230 BCE and 220 BCE. By

way of its links with the Satavahana Empire, it is steeped in Andhra's history and heritage. It had also been a prominent center of Buddhist studies in the 2nd century BCE. It was believed that the Emperor Ashoka himself commissioned the famed Buddhist Stupa of Amaravati. The stupa is very well known and is inscribed with panels depicting life and teachings of the Lord Buddha, Buddhist sculptures and slabs with Buddhist inscriptions. Adapting the name from such great ancient capital city Amaravati, Naidu believes that the capital city has both '*vastu balam*' (strength of *vastu*) and '*nama balam*' (strength of name), indicating that both the name and the location are auspicious (Sujatha, 2015).

By using the name Amaravati for the new capital, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister managed to strike an emotional chord especially with countries like Singapore and Japan, where Buddhism is the most widely practiced religion. Japanese Minister of Economics, Trade and Industry Yosuke Takagi at the foundation ceremony mentioned that it is a great pride and honor to stand this sacred land as they have learnt about this great land of Amaravati as a great seat of learning for Buddhism right from 3rd century BCE in Japan. This is from where the seed of Japanese nation's culture and values have emerged (Iyer, 2015). He also assured that, Japan will come forward to contribute its experience and technology to this sacred place. While Singapore based firms has prepared three master plans for Amaravati and is ready to partner in its development.

Though the government leaders had unanimity to the location of the new capital, they shared common vision concerning the nature of the city. They view the city as a formal-economic artifact; recognize international business districts, corporate headquarters, and chain restaurants; privilege mega projects designed by "starchitects"; and observe the Westernization of cities (Perera, Tang; 2013). Majority of the post-colonial leaders and planners consider Chandigarh as the great step forward for Indian planning which was done by Swiss architect Le Corbusier. Though there were other cities like Gandhinagar planned by

Indian planners after Chandigarh, nothing has come close to its scale or intense publicity. So, with its inspiration from Chandigarh, the government looks outside of India for architects and planners who can imagine Amaravati to be a modern world class city with western environments. As a matter of fact, no doubt that such type of planning can only be done by international architects and planners who has the minimal or no knowledge about the social and cultural aspects in India.

One another reason behind the selection of planners from Singapore and UK based Foster partners as architects to design the capitol complex, is to attract the investors from various parts of the world with the help of its publicity. Naidu is leaving no stone unturned to compensate the loss of Hyderabad, especially in attracting the revenue towards the capital city. In the name of planning he was trying to build up partnerships with Japan and Singapore expecting their firms to set up their base in the state. Locating the capital city between India's key economy generating cities namely Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam and Jagdalpur all of which lie within 300-400 km is expected to attract skilled and talented people from these cities.

MASTER PLAN:

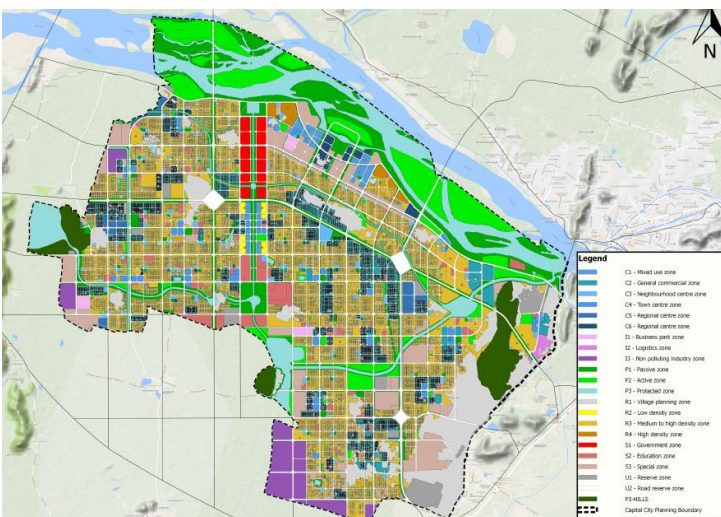


Figure 3: Master Plan of Amaravati
Source: Jain et al., 2018

Chandrababu Naidu's travel to Singapore, Japan and China in 2015 has been central to his conception of Amaravati. Enamored by Singapore's transformation into a leading financial hub in Asia, he was trying to build his capital city in Singapore's image.

According to the master plan

(figure:3), the development of the Amaravati is in the form of a rectangular grid aligned to

cardinal directions with primary roads aligned to north-south poles and the equator. Though the grid plan dates from antiquity and has originated in multiple cultures, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, are the major cities of the Indus Valley Civilization which built blocks divided by a grid of straight streets, running north-south and east-west. However, it became

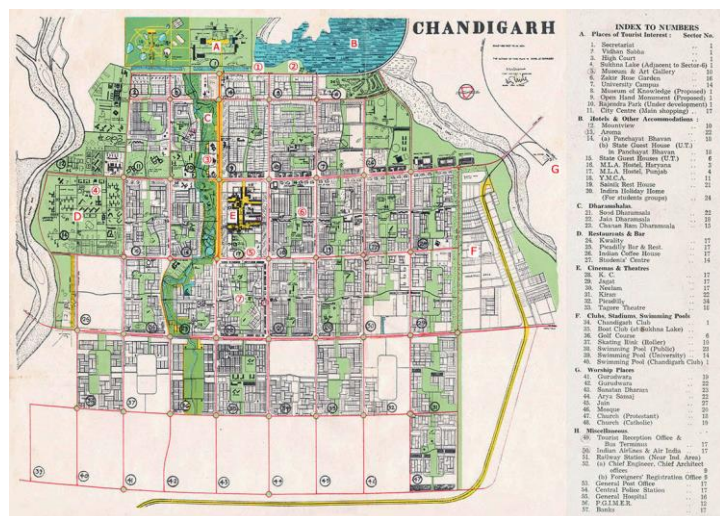


Figure 4: Master Plan of Chandigarh
Source: Kamiya, 2017

more prominent in India when planned in Chandigarh by Le Corbusier (figure:4) who believed grid iron plan as the only correct way of approaching the ‘modern’ problems of city planning (Kalia 1987). In support of his belief he pointed to the grid iron pattern of the thirteenth century bastides in the south of France and to American colonial cities of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, including the plan for Washington (Kalia,1987).

Naidu wanting Amaravati to be an ultra-modern and world class city was driven by the patterns of colonial cities. The word “modern” in India implies to something contemporary, western, superior and better. Admiration of Chandigarh’s planning and Naidu wanting Amaravati to be one of those cities which is often referred as ‘developed’ got him attracted to the straight patterned, and perfect angular roads design.

Secondly, vastu which is considered to play a very important role in planning especially in Andhra Pradesh, is the ‘traditional’ Hindu Indian system of architecture, under which the designs are intended to integrate man-made structures with nature, utilizing geometric patterns, symmetry and directional alignments. Naidu, being a Hindu believes in

vastu enormously. He was particular about the alignment of the central administrative center and all major city roads. Also, Andhra Pradesh being dominated by Hindus are keen about vastu in any residential or commercial developments. The grid network helps in developing east and west facing residential developments in the future which is considered mandatory requirement in vastu. Following these developments of modernity along with traditions, Naidu and planners call Amaravati as a “modern-Indian” city; an everyday phrase and a translation of ‘East-West’ since Nehruvian India.

Naidu’s fascination towards modern developments did not end with a gridiron pattern

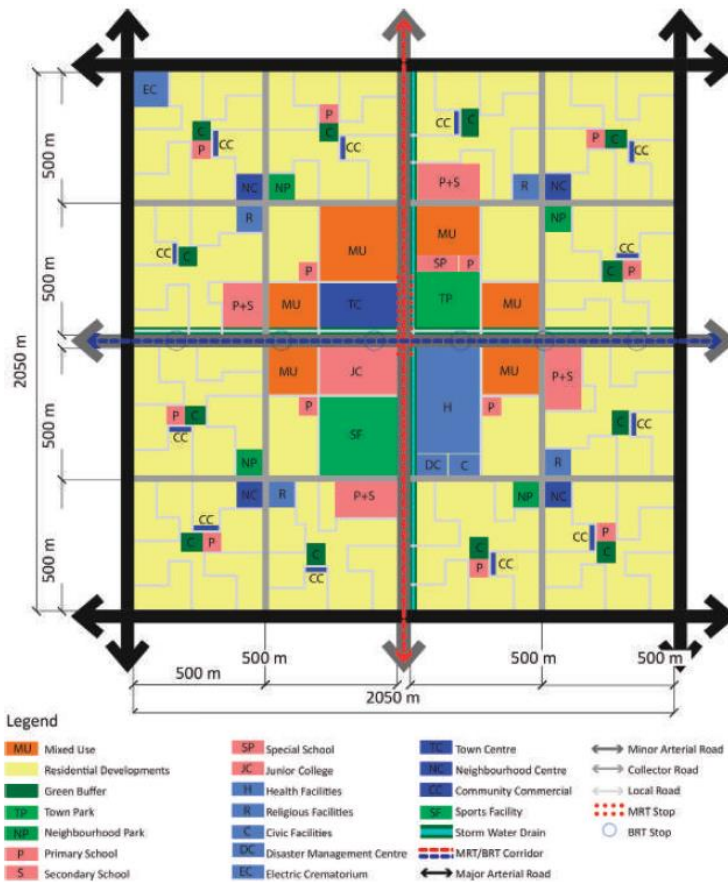


Figure 3: Township model of Amaravati
Source: Jain et al., 2018

but continued deeper to follow the concept of ‘neighborhood unit’ (figure:5). The concept was formed as a comprehensive physical planning tool by New York planner Clarence Perry in the 1920s, for designing self-contained neighborhood in metropolitan areas. It specifies four basic design elements: civic institutions (especially a school and a community center), parks and playgrounds, convenience stores, and a hierarchical configuration of streets providing safe pedestrian access to all public facilities. Originally

‘neighborhood unit’ concept was conceived as a remedy for the perceived ills in American cities, while the concept became stock planning item in the post-war United States and traveled to many countries including China, Britain and India (in Vidyarthi, 2013). Parts of India that has already attempted to indigenize the neighborhood unit are; in Delhi as ‘*Mohalla*’ unit, in Eastern India’s Bokaro Steel Plant’s township and in Rajasthan’s Jawahar Nagar. However, the concept has merely adapted to the environment of their respective places and resulted in dramatical changes accordingly to their present-day neighborhood (Vidyarthi, 2013) leaving crucial implications for the planning practice and literature. Amaravati following the same trajectory as the above neighborhoods will not be any different from them.

Amaravati township plan remind us of the “sectors”, a title for neighborhood units that became popular in Indian practice after Chandigarh, which employ the tenets of the neighborhood unit such as arterial roads on all sides, a hierarchical network of internal roads, predominantly residential land-use, open spaces and parks. Also, Jawahar Nagar’s planners attempted to improve the same upon the perceived shortcomings of the Chandigarh’s neighborhoods. Amaravati’s plan differed from Perry’s idea of neighborhood but is somewhat similar to Jawahar Nagar’s planning, with schools provided at the core of each sector and commercials in the central area or in a segregated block; except for the religious facilities which the capital city included. According to Sanjeev Vidyarthi’s (2013) observations in Jawahar Nagar, centrally placed school did not work in Indian cities and shops adjoining houses attracted the opposition of elite residents.

Unlike in United States, schools in India are provided by individual state authorities so due to lack of funds they become dumping grounds in many instances. Moreover, as Vidyarthi (2013) points out, a neighborhood unit neither eliminates nor restricts residents’ preferences and usages of provided public facilities, so they can send their children to a school in another

neighborhood. Also, almost all of the middle-class parents prefer expensive “English medium” or private schools that usually provide a complete education from nursery to high school level, contradicting the planning of providing a hierarchy of primary and secondary schools within quarter, half and one-mile radii. Thus, the ill fate of school sites in newly planned neighborhoods reduced the significance of their central location in neighborhoods for Indian planner (Vidyarthi, 2013).

Also, the Krishna and Guntur districts comprise of the best agricultural lands and is often referred to as the rice bowl of the country. Farmers often bring these fresh vegetables, fruits, flowers and many others directly from their farm lands and sell them on carts road side at low prices. Thus, the wide range of bazaars and informal spaces that are part of the culture are not even considered into the plan. When planners do not acknowledge these local activities and culture, people initially familiarize the (abstract) space and tend to transform into their own lived spaces within their own capacities. Yet nothing can completely prevent ordinary people from transforming abstract (and absolute) space into livable space or carving out the latter from the former (Perera,2016).

For instance, in three decades Jawahar Nagar saw major transformations from the original planned unit by planners. Such as upgrading a plot concerning mandatory restrictions and prescribed heights, conversion of houses into shops and offices and transformation of public spaces. As evident, people are not passive recipients of the dreams of the dominant actors. Thus, highlighting that Indian planners have not only refused to acknowledge and incorporate the pervasive transformations and underlying collective behaviors into decision-making but also continue to believe in planning’s efficacy only as a rationally applicable technology (Vidyarthi, 2013).

Naidu when asked in an interview by Romig (2017) about his vision towards Amaravati, says that “I’m not thinking [of] today and tomorrow, but thousands of years, for future

generations....”. While Jawahar Nagar saw a drastic change from its original conception in just three decades, one might question Amaravati’s similar township planning asking; Can Amaravati retain its township planning as planned at least for 50 years after implementation?

Navratna: city of Nine Themes:

Combining the above described township model blocks together, a final master plan was developed by the Singapore planners. However, the concept plan was proposed with nine themed development cities in the capital city (figure:6), which is expected to be a hub of activities serving a unique function and as employment generators within the capital. This is not the first time for a city to have different themed districts, though Amaravati might be the first to have all the nine different themes. Cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai,

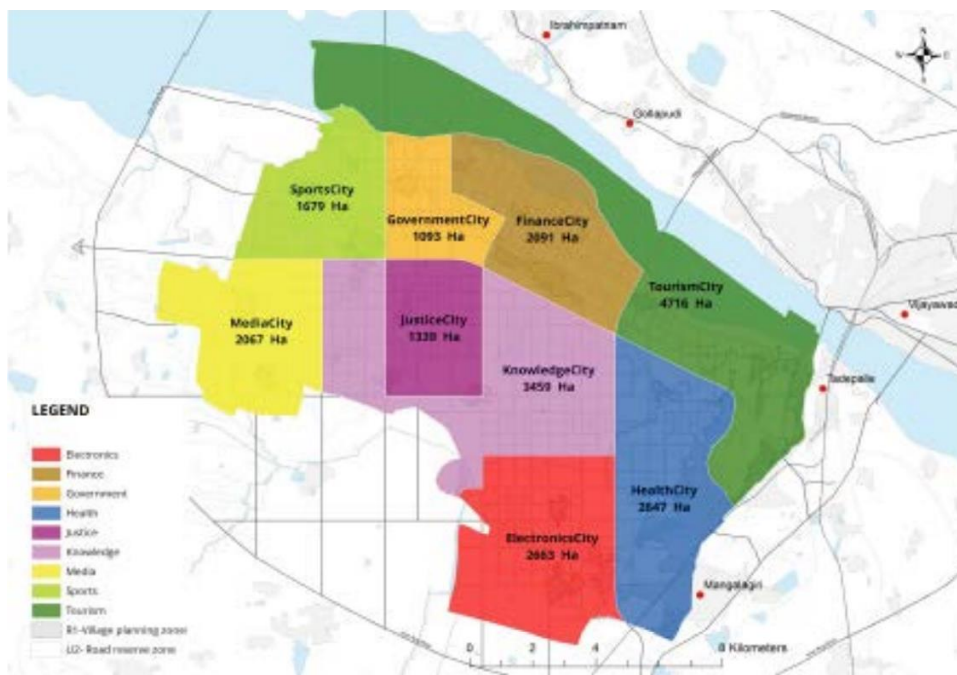


Figure 4: Nine themed cities of Amaravati
Source: Jain et al., 2018

Hyderabad have their own experiences either with government city or electronic city or knowledge city or with financial city in various ways. While one can relate closely with the experiences in Bangalore and Hyderabad due to

its familiarity with the nearly similar cultural behaviors between people. Apart from the

behavior styles of people, the similarity between these cities and Amaravati is, that a Singapore-based transnational real-estate developer specializing in building high-tech enclaves, was involved in establishing such areas in both Bangalore and Hyderabad. While Chandrababu Naidu played a major role in Hyderabad by acquiring seventeen villages to create a world-class high-tech enclave called Cyberabad (called as electronic city in Amaravati concept plan).

The master plan of Hyderabad focuses on software related industries, but in support to them massive private investments in real estate development complemented the high-tech enclave. To accommodate the rich and elite and support working class people in this industry, investors focused on developing modern apartments, gated condominiums, sprawling golf course, shopping malls, hostels for working men and women, and rows of exotic restaurants and star hotels. Additionally, the concentration of IT parks at one place encouraged people to commute (from home place) which increased its traffic flow in morning and evening hours. Now, Madhapur, the south western region of Cyberabad is one of those most congested areas in Hyderabad and is trying to resolve its problems like any other places in the city.

According to Cindi Katz (2004), people rely on the knowledge they have accumulated throughout their lives to reproduce their livelihoods, in the face of dramatic social, economic, and political changes. Thus, the displaced local villagers resisting relocation negotiated a livelihood, by establishing small tea shacks, local food and vegetable stalls, and other small shops in open and unused areas along the main roads and around high-tech construction sites in Cyberabad (Das, 2013). Proving that a space cannot be confined with boundaries and laws when they are different from the social and cultural practices. This can be better understood in Nihal Perera's (2016) work on "people's spaces", where one can understand how people transform the planned spaces (done by dominant actors) to their own lived spaces within existing conditions. However, Hyderabad's Cyberabad acts as a practical

example to just one themed city in Amaravati, while one can expect the consequences of creating nine such unique districts.



shows that the physical space of the village is accommodated in plan, but minimal importance

Figure 5: Integrated existing settlements in the master plan of Amaravati
Source: Jain et al., 2018

Apart from creating nine themed cities, the proposed master plan integrated the existing village settlements as R1 by providing commercial center and public facilities in close proximity to the existing settlements (figure:7). These are the 24 revenue villages and part of Tadepalli municipality of Guntur district on which the capital city is being built upon. Most of the villager's open (non-built) agricultural lands were acquired for the construction of the capital city, leaving the existing settlements (built environment) untouched. Planners mention that the master plan will ensure conservation of existing settlements and create employment opportunities for the existing population. However, it clearly

is given to their socio-cultural aspects.

Amaravati quoted as people's capital by the planners claim to serve the public health, safety and welfare. Yet, it resembles that, knowledge of the spaces ordinary people produces for and through daily activities and cultural practices are minimal. The (abstract) spaces created by the powerful actors such as a

colonial regime, state policy or a world heritage designation are incomplete and contain cracks, fissures and fussy boundaries (Perera, 2016). When people occupy these, they create (negotiate) lived spaces for their daily activities and cultural practices within given possibilities and constraints. This creates a conflict between abstract spaces and lived spaces i.e., between the way authorities intend for a space to be used and the way the space is ultimately used. Some of these transformations has been illustrated in detail in the next chapter.

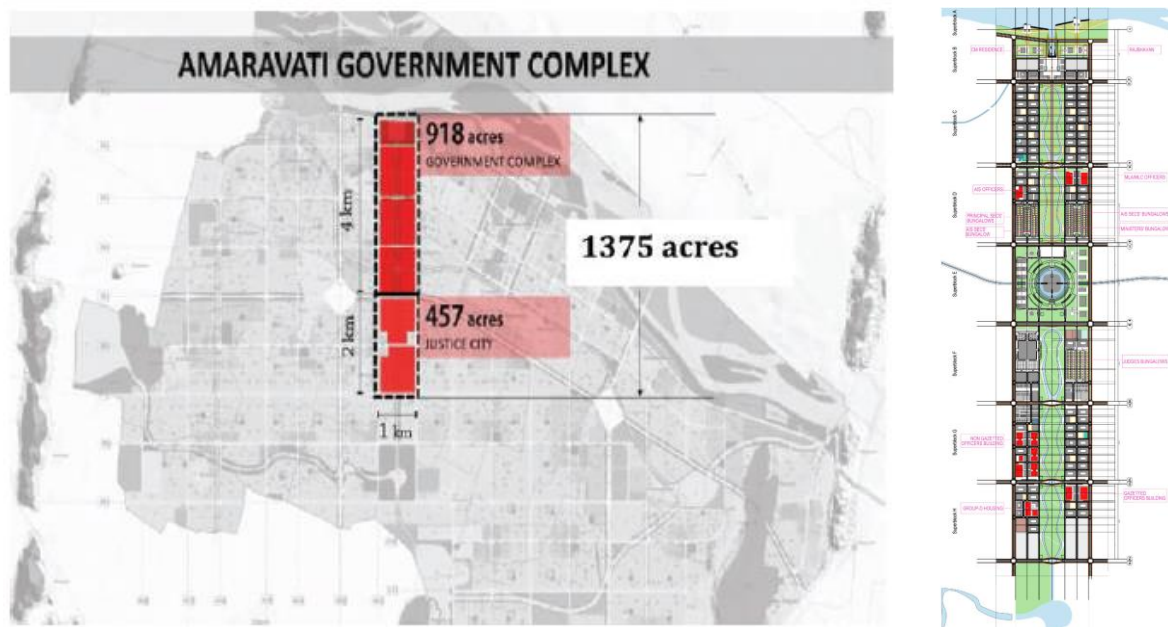


Figure 6: Amaravati government complex

Source: Jain et al., 2018

GOVERNMENT / CAPITOL COMPLEX:

Chandigarh's capitol complex was placed in the north-east corner of the capitol to take advantage of Shivalik hill in the background. In contrast, Capitol complex of Gandhinagar was placed in the heart of the city with a central greenery of 60mt. wide having a riverfront behind. However, Amaravati having the combination of both natural features, is located in the heart of the capital city (figure:8). Having Krishna River at the north edge of the

complex, it has Kondapalli hills on the north and Neerukonda hill to the south which become points of reference for the area at a Macro scale.

According to most of the planners and architects, Chandigarh has architecturally prominent and significant buildings designed by Le Corbusier unlike Gandhinagar and Naya Raipur. Again, after decades, Naidu wanted the government buildings also to have some architectural significance, i.e., along with the ‘designed’ master plan. Driven by the name of modernization and western built forms, Naidu and his authorities selected a British architect Norman Foster to design the government complex. While the British architect took this opportunity to bring back the glorifying imprints of the British Empire. Inspired from Lutyens’ New Delhi capitol complex which Le Corbusier contradicted in his design, the government complex was aligned straight in north-south direction, with a ceremonial axis clearly defined by green spine running through its length.

The 1375-acre capitol complex in Amaravati is a hub of state administration and



Figure 7: Components of Amaravati government complex
Source: Jain et al., 2018

governance (figure:9). It consists of 'iconic' civic institutions of legislature, high court, secretariat, Raj Bhavan and housing for various government functionaries. Naidu wanted the



government complex to be 'inviting and accessible' to people, so that it justifies the caption of people's capital in his point of view. Also, inspired by New York's

Central Park and public squares, a central vista, riverfront and a capital square were designed

Figure 8: Legislature building design in Amaravati by Norman Foster
Source: Jain et al., 2018

for people to come and interact with 'their' capital.

Also, to keep the spaces active and vibrant at all times of the day, residential, offices, recreational and cultural uses were designed as the part of the government complex. While the riverfront to north-east will house the city's civic core and central business district (CBD).

The legislature building (figure:10) designed by Norman Foster consists of the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council, central hall and hosts several ancillary functions within the building. The 'iconic' building spreads over 400 acres on the ceremonial axis is 250 mt. tall. With the thought that humans last only for few decades but buildings last for centuries, the design was more significant, that it does not fit in with any of the present architecture buildings in the capital region or in India. In other words, without the flag, no one will be able to recognize it as an Indian state's legislative building. Architects claim that the design represents 'people and their aspirations'. Also, public and tourists are allowed into the core of the building, is justified as giving prominence to Amaravati as "people's capital" in their perspective. Thus, questioning the meaning of "people" in their point of view.



Figure 9: High court design in Amaravati by Norman Foster
Source: Jain et al., 2018

Moreover, the high court (figure:11) proposed to be built in the justice city, south of the Amaravati government complex, is inspired by Indian stupas. Along with the dream of catching up with the west, Naidu made sure that the designs include the symbols and monuments that could be called their

own. In this context, Indian leaders and architects think of this design as a great creation that could powerfully affect Indian architecture in the future.

During his visit to India, Norman Foster told the press that “the [Amaravati] design brings together our decades-long research into sustainable cities, incorporating the latest technologies that are currently being developed in India” (*Norman Foster visits Amaravati*, 2018, Para:2). The concept plans itself indicates that the architects were eager to implement their dream designs and Naidu sharing the same vision as the Norman Foster’s team turned Amaravati into a land for experiments.

With my own experience in a video conference with the Foster’s team (as an intern at APCRDA), Indian planners had a tough time explaining the need for more parking lots than provided. When asked about the provision of more parking lots, Foster’s team was unable to understand the conditions in India and cultural practices in it. The architects were providing parking within conditions and sizes in New York which are very different than in India. Parking has become a huge problem in India and the congestion intensifies when political leaders and their vehicular parking are considered in design because of the high security they need. Lack of adequate parking space would only result in turning green spaces into parking lots. Such

small-space making efforts of people add up to huge transformations surpassing any production of formal space (Perera, 2016).

The blue-green (representing water as blue, vegetation as green) master plan creates interfaces between water themed public spaces such as lake-parks, waterfront corridors, and linear parks, reserving 30 % of capital city area for the open space and recreational zone. The plan which is highly concerned about nature pays very little attention to social and cultural aspects. Also, nature, in this plan, is neither the existing farmlands nor wildlife but the cleansed and purified spaces that are capable of making visual effects prominent.

In short, Amaravati is not a planned but a designed capital, to implement the urban dreams of a capital city by different and dominant social actors within various conceptions. It demonstrates the continuing hegemony of the colonial culture, imported colonial and modernist planning approaches and consumerism (Perera, 2005). However, materializing these dreams were no easy for the state government. The next chapter details out the interactions that occur in the process of materializing these dreams by focusing on the ways in which they are being negotiated and how the final outcomes are being produced.

AMARAVATI: MATERIALIZING URBAN DREAMS

Although Amaravati is visualized with glass and steel structures, stylish designs, shopping malls, high-rise complexes, and flyovers, the realities and existing conditions behind these facades tell us a different story. In the context of the previous chapter which provides the imaginations of dominant actors for a “good life,” this chapter tries to showcase the ground conditions of the capital city, highlighting the impact of dominant urban dreams on the lives and livelihoods of the subjects. “People” in this chapter refers to the ordinary citizens who have no power to create a space as the state and capital (Perera, 2016). In other words, they are meant to be subjects of the abstract spaces created by the state and capital. This chapter details the interactions between the (dominant) dreams and (ground) realities, and the negotiations between the dominant actors and the subjects along these lines, the former attempting to materialize their dreams while the latter trying to create livable places. The challenges also came from within the government, both national and state. I will focus on the ways in which the dreams are negotiated, and the outcomes are produced.

As introduced above, Amaravati is visualized to be a world class city by the state government is being built on 33,000 acres (217 Sq.km.) of land owned by individual farmers between Vijayawada and Guntur along the banks of river Krishna. The new capital comprises of 24 revenue villages and part of Tadepalli municipality of Guntur district spanning across an area of 53,748 acres. The 33,000 acres of land on which it is built consists of two types: drylands and wetlands. The wet or *jareebu* lands are classified highly fertile which can support the growing of over 120 varieties of crops that yield crops thrice a year with the water table at 15 to 20 feet. There is no other agricultural hub in India that produces these many varieties of crops or provide yields of this magnitude. According to the farmers in this region, it takes thousands of years to create a top soil of such richness; it has taken farmers decades of effort to enhance the fertility of the land. However, this is not the first time in

India to build a capital city on fertile lands. Chandigarh which is being an inspiration for capital cities in India was also built on rich and fertile agricultural land displacing farmers of seventeen villages (Kalia, 1987).

The government usually targets land owned by farmers for land pooling or acquisition because of their inability to defend or fight against dominant actors. This unequal power relations make it easy for the government to acquire land. The main organization that is coordinating between Naidu's (state government's) dreams and the people in capital region and capital city is APCRDA. The Capital Region Development Act 2014' has formed APCRDA for the purpose of planning, coordination, execution, supervision, financing, funding and also for promoting and securing the planned development of the capital region and capital city area for the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The first challenge to the transformation of Andhra Pradesh's dreams into reality came from the central government of India. In 2014, the government of India formed a committee under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act 2014 to explore site options for the new capital as mentioned in the above chapter. Headed by K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, the committee included urban planners and design experts. In August 2014, the committee argued (Sivaramakrishnan, K.C., et al.,2014), that the decentralization of the development could bring the governance closer to people, encourage balanced development, and avoids civic problems typically associated with big cities. It also emphasized that large-scale takeover of fertile agricultural land is short-sighted, i.e., building on the selected site would diminish food security in the long run.

According to the Sivaramakrishnan-committee report (2014), Guntur and Krishna have the second highest population in the state at 49 lakhs (4.9m) and 45 lakhs (4.5m) with a workforce of nearly 23.8 lakhs and 20.48 lakhs respectively. Of this work force, 65% in Guntur and 56% in Krishna are farmers and agricultural laborer. The committee report, in fact,

rejected the present site, emphasizing that any attempt to convert agricultural land into non-agricultural use, especially at this scale, would seriously displace this workforce rendering them unemployed, and lead to the loss of valuable agricultural land, the disappearance of small holdings and farmers, and solely benefit land speculation and increase profit for real estate operators. Also, the Geological Survey of India carried out a seismic micro zonation for this area and highlighted the problems of high-water table and vulnerable soil types which together may cause severe problems for foundations, due to the loss of bearing capacity. This is one of the reasons for not having many high-rise buildings in this area.

Despite the Committee's recommendations, Naidu announced the location of the capital city between Guntur and Vijayawada cities. To acquire the required land for the visually world-class city, state government resorted to land pooling schemes (LPS), i.e., pooling the land, develop them and return a part of the newly serviced land to the owners. Land pooling is supposed to be voluntary and an alternative to land acquisition. APCRDA was directed to undertake the development of the city through land pooling in capital city area.

Negotiating every project on the ground, especially with people, is very crucial in India. The outcome of state action is almost always negotiated by local people on the ground, including the owners of land and users. As the Andhra government attempts to materialize its dreams, the people who are affected by the project also take part in it. While some welcome the changes, others do not; some of these others play a passive role while others resist and protest. The rest of the chapter details out how various groups of people have taken part in the project, as collaborators, protestors, and mostly in between, paying special attention to the contradictions between the dreams and the realities.

LAND POOLING SCHEME:

Land pooling is a scheme implemented by the state government where the land owners surrender their land in return for a smaller plot of urban, serviced land (returnable plot) in the capital city area that is of higher value than the land relinquished. In other words, the state government provides infrastructure and public facilities in the pooled land, often keeps the land with it for future sale, and return a portion of the land to the owners in proportion to their original share (Ramachandraiah, 2016). Several states in India have adopted land pooling methods for different types of projects over the years. However, the significant difference of Amaravati's land pooling concept between them is the scale of the project. Along with the serviced land, the land owners will also receive a range of livelihood support measures including *inter alia* an annuity, skill upgrading and support for setting up self-employed enterprises.

In short, the 'benefits' given by the state government under LPS are; (i) returnable plots of urban land in Amaravati City's perimeter; (ii) annuity payments for a period of ten years; and (iii) other benefits including waiver of agricultural loans, skill training, and interest free loans for setting up enterprises. Among the 53,748 acres of total land available under the capital city area, 38,581 acres of land was targeted under the land pooling scheme. While 34,690 acres of land were consented under LPS, 33,201 acres was pooled and included in development agreement by March 2018.

In LPS documentation, a multi-departmental team within APCRDA made a graphic representation (figure:12) highlighting the reasons why landowners contribute their land to the land pooling scheme. According to this graphic, 24% of the land owners found the compensation offered for land attractive; 22% of them wanted to contribute to the making of the capital city; 15% felt agriculture was not a viable occupation; 24% joined the scheme as everyone else in the village was joining; and 14% felt that the pooling system offered a better

package than compensation under land acquisition. The respondents are diverse; they include absentee landlords who live abroad and hire agricultural laborer to work in their fields,

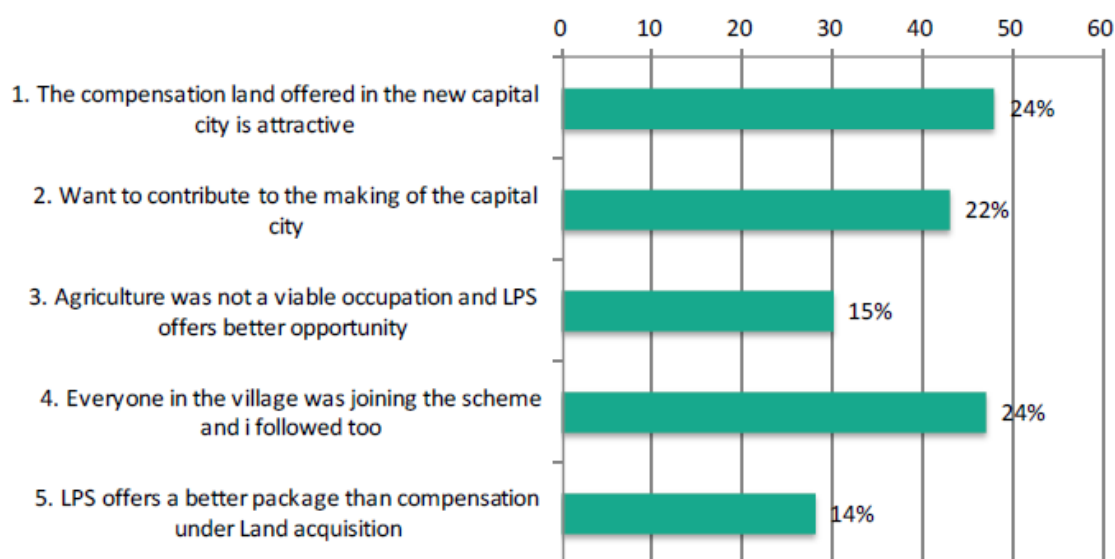


Figure 10: Graphical representation of reasons why landowners contributed their land to the land pooling scheme

owners of dry land with no proper ground water supply or irrigation systems, parents whose children are settled abroad in different occupations and small landowners or farmers who feared the dominant actors and had no other choice as the majority of their village who voluntarily contributed their land for the capital-building project.

One of them is Nivas Rao who gave up 8 acres of his jasmine and vegetable farm. The process started in 2015 when an official from APCRDA held an informal meeting, at the panchayat office in Nidamaruru village. Rao recalls the official making some grand statements in Telugu: “I welcome you all to give your land today and be part of the future city. But if you decide not to pool your land, then we will have no option but to acquire it through the Land Acquisition Act.” He was boggled because he had to struggle getting compensation under the land acquisition act in 1983 with Visakhapatnam Urban Development Authority (UDA). When it seemed like the state would take his land no matter what, he hedged his bets. On the very

final day, he agreed to give his last 8 acres to the land pooling scheme because he feared the alternative: land acquisition. Rao is now among over 28,000 farmers who have pooled their land towards the construction of the city of Amaravati and helped the AP government collect 86% of the targeted 38,581 acres according to an APCRDA project report as on March 2018.

Returnable urban plots:

‘Returnable plots’ is a term that is often referred to the smaller plots of urban serviced land in the capital city area, that is of higher value than the land relinquished, that will be returned to those who pooled their land. According to the APCRDA report (2018), 95%

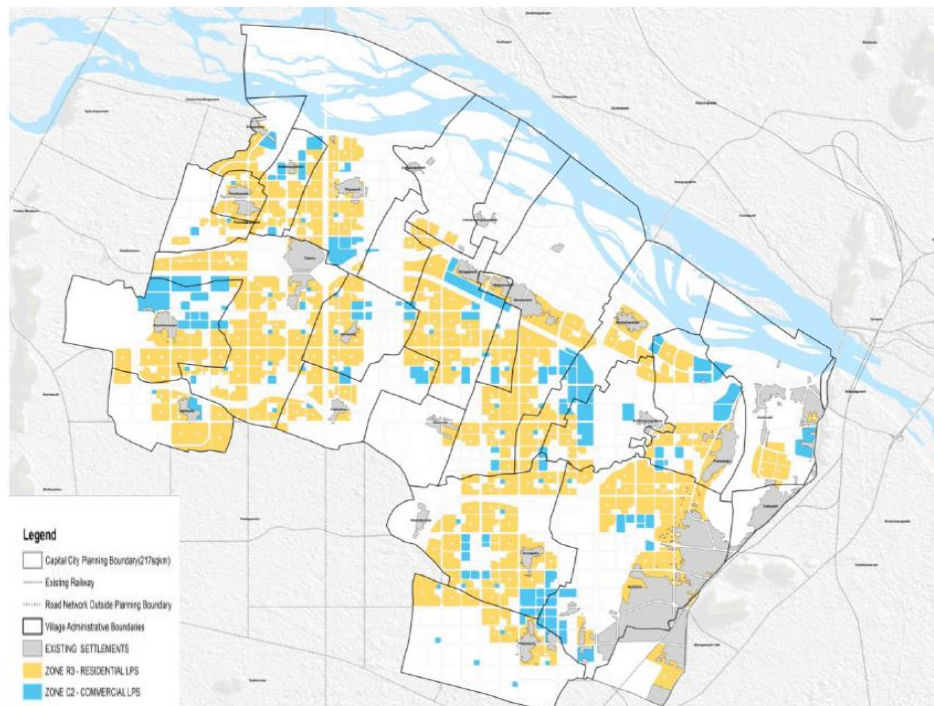


Figure 11: LPS returnable commercial and residential plots in Amaravati
Source: Jain et al., 2018

of the capital city area is owned by landowners of returnable plots (figure:13). These plots were returned through an electronic lottery conducted in the presence of landowners, village elders, public representatives, and other stakeholders.

However, there were objections to the plots having road hits (a plot facing a T-junction road where the road straightly hits the plot), and south or west facing plots, which are considered problematic according to vastu. Also, people raised concerns on the plot location.

The majority of people in India, especially rural areas, bury the dead or cremate the corpses in their own farm land. In all 29 revenue villages that form Amaravati, people follow the practice of cremation. So, few private plots in Amaravati also consist of graveyards with stones of remembrance of their ancestors. APCRDA did not promise to return serviced plots at the same places, including the stones. Amaravati planners are trying hard to impose an overdetermined communal lifestyle upon the land owners

Yet people's cultures and lifestyle prevent them of accepting such Western modernist ideologies. Thus, people who received the plots with graveyards showed discontent and refused to accept the new land as compensation for their old farm land, considering them as bad omen. Instead, they demanded for another plot in another location. APCRDA is yet to find a solution to this and other cultural issues.

Annuity Payments:

Annuity payments is the second component of the compensation package. According to this program, that landowners who have contributed land to LPS will receive compensation from the APCRDA. These payments are paid at the rate of INR 30,000 or INR 50,000 per acre of contributed land, with 10% adjustment per year for inflation, over a period of ten years. The amount is based on the net crop loss per an acre of dry or Jareebu lands respectively. Nearly 26,830 farmers received compensation and, according to its project report (2018), APCRDA spent INR 429.70 crores in annuity. All others who depended on agricultural land, i.e. landless agricultural labor, are provided with a pension of INR 2500 per month for a period of 10 years.

According to the state government, this 10-year period is for agricultural laborers to adapt to non-agricultural income-generating activities. Poorer and vulnerable groups will also be provided with further livelihood support and access to the social development schemes

and additional livelihood schemes which are yet to be designed. Participating farmers began receiving annuity payments as part of their LPS benefits package in May 2015. AS per the announcement of Naidu, APCRDA began distributing monthly pensions in May 2015 to the agricultural laborers and tenant farmers who resided in the capital city area as of December 8, 2014.

While government assumes that it is providing support for people in an efficient and appropriate manner, Nageswara Rao who receives INR 30,000 a month says it does not cover his son's medical college fees. He says that owning an agricultural land gave him the flexibility to sell small pieces of land when he needed large sums of money, like for a house, wedding, or college. While building a city with IT companies, banks and hospitals, saying that their next generations never have to farm, makes him ask how will their son become a doctor if his farmer father can no longer afford to educate him? "People in cities think farmers are sentimental when they are attached to land, but that is because you don't understand our



Figure 12: Bulldozers taking down banana plantation in Amaravati area

rationale" said one of the farmers. Further, he did not realize that as soon as he agreed to pool his land for Amaravati, he had to stop farming. He thought that he could farm until APCRDA pushed them to stop cultivating to convince the

visiting teams of potential investors and realtors and start construction. Another farmer Venkatapathy Naidu adds that he could not watch bulldozers taking down his banana plantation (figure:14), and now 20 of his 36 pooled acres are barren. He stealthily grows

paddy, turmeric and lemons on the remaining land left after giving away to land pooling. However, there are other land owners like Rao who totally support the land pooling scheme; he volunteered his 40 acres of land to the capital city project. Being the last farmer in his family and having his son and daughter as doctors abroad, he gave his land to save his family's economic future, not necessarily to contribute to the capital city project. However, he still trusts the government. He is not happy with the speed of construction and is planning to ask the government to pay monthly compensation for 15 instead of 10 years. It is hard to see the correlation between his demand and the speed of the capital city project. He is definitely interested in making the project beneficial to him.

The majority of upper middle-class landowners, i.e., non-farmers, left the small landowners or farmers with no choice except taking the annuity payments. These farmers either turned into shopkeepers in the existing villages or are still searching for other sources of employment. While comments of Nageswara Rao on annuity payments tell us that their agricultural land, especially their livelihoods that were tied to these lands are irreplaceable no matter what the government pays. Overall, the land owners are striving hard to overcome their loss of agricultural lands and the livelihoods tied to those, while the agricultural laborers who worked in fields are in search of other jobs like autorickshaw drivers, construction workers, and house maids.

Other Benefits:

The other benefits that APCRDA is extending to LPS participants include the waiving of agricultural loans, the provision of interest-free loans for self-employment, educational facilities and access to medical facilities. According to the APCRDA, these social development initiatives help the farmers, landowners, and landless pensioners, particularly women and

marginal farmers and other weaker sections, in smoothly overcoming the transit from agricultural to urban life.

However, there are gaps in its implementation too. The national government has released the required funds directly to *Rythu Sadhikara Samstha* for onward payment to banks per government norms. Even after the farm loan waiver scheme was implemented in 2014, many farmers still complain that they were being left out, and some others say they just got a partial waiver (Ramachandraiah, 2016). Also, many of them complain that their loans have still not been waived, and they are unable to get new ones because of non-repayment of the old ones. Some claim that the waiver has benefited big farmers and landowners, leaving out tenant farmers and landless poor.

Apart from waiving loans, APCRDA, through its nodal agency Andhra Pradesh Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC), is providing skill development training to the youth. It is further trying to establish a skill development institute by partnering with various reputed NGOs and private sector entities. According to its report (year), APCRDA has begun the second phase training in various domains including painting underground cabling, plumbing, general supervisors, mobile AC technicians, beauticians, and two-wheeler Motor Mechanics. However, 1560 members trained in this program consisted more of educated unemployed youth.

As the state government and APCRDA were organizing the above social initiatives, people in the existing villages continued to reproduce their lives. Some of the landless laborers and uneducated people initiated to survive on animal husbandry, feeding herds of cows, sheeps and goats. The empty barren lands turned into grazing lands for goats and sheeps. This was not just limited to the surrounding farmers. Along with nine other men from his village, Mallampalli, in the neighboring Krishna district, Ravindra Babu, 34-year-old goat herder had travelled over 150 kilometers along with 1,000 goats, inching along highways and by lanes, thus reaching the site of the future capital (figure:15). He said that some men from

their village came to scout the place and then word just got around that there is empty land where goats can be taken to graze. Earlier, many of them used to drive their goats up to the Vellampalli forest, 80 kilometers south of the site designated for Amaravati. At present, they are surviving on this land not knowing what will happen next, once the building of the capital



Figure 13: Agricultural lands turned into grazing lands in the site designated for Amaravati

city gets under way.

Similarly, not knowing what will happen after building a city and about the new laws of the capital city, people in undisturbed settlements (existing villages) in the capital city are in a hurry to lay further claims to their property; many add additional floors to existing buildings and build on the vacant lands. According to the Andhra Pradesh Government Order, at the minimum, a 30 feet road is required for a four-story building to be constructed but, after the announcement of capital city area, the landowners started to construct four to five storied structures abutting 10-foot roads, leaving no setbacks. These are the small properties mostly owned by landowners involved in land pooling. They are expected to build according to policies and live in abstract city spaces created by the authorities. While these people hire architects and engineers to simply comply with the law on paper, so to satisfy the authorities. On site, they achieve the maximum usage of land, building their homes with the help of local building contractors, fulfilling their own needs and wants. In regard to cities such as Gangtok, Perera (2016) had demonstrated that builders neither totally adopt, nor totally reject

dominant perceptions; they exercise their agency in the “room for maneuvering” between adopting and rejecting. This is precisely what we see in Amaravati. The builders see opportunities and adopt various tactics to negotiate rules and regulations adapting them to suit their own needs and wants while remaining “legal” (Perera,2016). While the surrounding agricultural lands are forced to leave barren, land owners and farmers are being left with no option in the existing villages.

Since the proposed capital city (or the site) does not have any living options except in existing villages, APCRDA officials and others travelling to and from Amaravati for surveys, take food stops in these villages. People in the villages now sell coconut water, fruits, and other foods on movable carts to satisfy this huge demand by the travelers. Thus, in attempting to live their lives better within their own capacities, people have begun to transform their own environments. For instance, Mandadam village where almost everyone was a farmer was famous for its fruits and flowers. After these farmers gave up all their land to the state government under the land-pooling scheme for the new capital, most of them introduced they themselves as “real-estate agents” or “businessmen”. One advertises “comfortable hostel accommodation for working men” at affordable rates. Other promises to deliver bottled water at the doorstep. While some landless owners have erected Informal food stalls by the roads, auto rickshaw drivers advertise their phone numbers to transport employees to and from the transitional secretariat (discussed in the next section).

These are the consequences of land pooling of nearly 33,000 acres of agricultural lands for the capital city, but the state government is getting ready to land pool 3000 acres more to build the outer ring road. National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has already approved Singapore's firm Surbana Jurong's plan of Ring Road. This is the means for the state government to collect the required land for the road using the land pooling method without bearing the financial burden. The six-track outer ring is expected to pass through 49 villages

in Krishna and 38 in Guntur district. The nearby Vijayawada city has been facing traffic problems for more than three decades due to passing traffic on Hyderabad-Chennai and Chennai-Kolkata highways. Thus, the purpose of the outer ring is to prevent vehicles making long-distance trips between Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam and Kolkata, passing Amaravati, from entering the city.

Amaravati city requires more land than the pooled 33,000 acres and the 3,000 acres “acquired” for the outer ring road. As evident in Chandigarh, the outer ring will not be the boundary of the city. Chandigarh was planned with a green belt around it, but with time, private developments grew around the city. It saw a high influx of people into the city and surrounding areas, making the city build satellite towns; Amaravati seems to be on the same path. According to the previous experience, land around the proposed 6-lane roads would encourage the realtors to construct further commercial and high-rise buildings instead of farming; this could lead to the loss of a larger quantity of productive farm fields.

TRIP TO SINGAPORE:

As a part of negotiation, APCRDA hosted a 3-day trip to Singapore exclusively for farmers who gave away their land for the capital. As Singapore is the model in Naidu’s vision, APCRDA wanted the farmers to use the compensation provided by the government to seek alternative means of livelihood guided by Singapore. According to the APCRDA officials 123 eligible farmers among the 153 that applied were sent on trips to Singapore in four smaller groups in the months of November 2017 and February 2018. They were selected based on several criteria; priority was given to those interested in becoming entrepreneurs and starting their own businesses (Janyala, 2017). However, it was not free of cost for the farmers; they had to pay for the flight expenses that was about INR 25,000. The government spent on accommodation, food, visa, insurance, and the local tour in Singapore city. When an APCRDA

official asked the farmers if they had any questions regarding the trip, the first question, asked by 60-year old Simha, was, “How many lakhs can I take to Singapore? How much gold can I buy?” While Madhu told the Indian Express news agency (2017) that “the officials told us that we will get a lot of ideas on how to do small- and medium-size businesses. I want to start a flower supply business and am hoping to get ideas on how to start a flower garden in the middle of the capital region.” However, according to Indian Express news agency, many people have admitted that they were looking forward to shopping or visiting universal studios at Disneyland which is far away from the thought of the APCRDA officials.

People are fascinated by the name Singapore as they hear the name frequently from their leader as one of the world class cities. Many of these farmers have not stepped out of Andhra Pradesh. They have no idea about the international travel, or rules and culture in Singapore; they were worried about the language barrier. An APCRDA official was sent as translator who would guide them during the three-day tour. This is a great opportunity for a middle-class family that can neither afford the entire expenditure of the trip accommodation, nor understand a foreign language. Considering this as an opportunity to step out their village and have a holiday, these farmers were willing to spend their airfare. Ultimately, this was a trip organized on the dreams of the weak, by the dominant actors with power, to accomplish their goals.

FUNDING AND PROGRESS OF THE CAPITAL CITY:

According to the concept plan, Amaravati is expected to be built in three phases that continues until 2050. The first phase, spanning the first ten years (2015-2025), includes the building of government administrative core along with the ceremonial axis and parts of the SEED development area: the business park and the light industrial area. It is expected to provide housing for 850,000 people which is about 39% of the total population of Amaravati

capital city. According to APCRDA's estimate, the building activity requires about INR 58,000 crores, in the next 20 years. Till date, the central government has given only INR 1,500 crores for the project; an additional INR 1,000 crores are expected to be released in phases. In comparison, with Nehru's involvement, the builders of Chandigarh did not have to look for expenses. Nehru's involvement in the project made the central government play an active role. In regard to Amaravati, the lack of financial support from Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and the continuous deferment of the releasing of funds by the World Bank work as a hindrance for Naidu's materialization of Western urban dreams in India.

Despite the hardships, Naidu is adamant. He told *Agency France-Presse* (Tabassum, 2018) that "I am not changing any plans for Amaravati. I only have to work harder to make it a reality". The state government has been trying hard to pull as many sources as possible, but the World Bank continues to be its major source.

In May 2017, a few landowners from capital villages had written to the Bank alleging harm from the LPS. The inspection panel registered a request for inspection in June 2017, and it has been making trips to the capital region to interact with the landholders. There were also alleged rumors that the opposition party YSR congress is supporting these landowners, i.e., their agitations, for its political benefit. When asked about the deferment of funds from the World Bank and other sources, at an informal conversation, an Assistant Zonal Planning Officer answered with utmost confidence that "funds will be approved no matter what. If not, the World Bank there will be another source. Amaravati will not be stopped" (personal communication, 2017).

In the meantime, a loan of INR 1275 crores from Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) was sanctioned in December 2017 to fund the first-tier infrastructure, mainly the most significant roads. Also, various commercial banks such as

Andhra Bank, Indian Bank and Vijaya Bank came forward to extend short term funds for various development works in the capital city.

However, as the World Bank made the second deferment in August 2018, APCRDA will not be able to rely on this source till 2019. The application for funds would not move to the appraisal stage, i.e., for final approval, without a clean-chit (a certificate of exoneration given by law enforcement agencies to suspects in a crime) from the panel of inspectors. This may not happen until the elections which is scheduled for April 2019. With no certainty whether the voters will give him the mandate, Naidu is struggling hard to collect funds and start construction. This way no other party that might come to power in April 2019 will be able to stop the building of the capital city that he dreamt.

Apart from banks, Naidu introduced programs like “My Brick-My Amaravati” where an individual can contribute INR 10 per brick online that will be used in the construction of the capital. In return they are given a receipt in the form of a certificate bearing Naidu’s signature, and their names mentioned as ‘partners of Amaravati’ on the website. As on 13 October 2018, 2,28,016 had donated 57,30,711 bricks towards Amaravati; this is since 2015. No one ever knows how this money would actually be used.

The estimated construction cost of the proposed government buildings like Raj Bhavan, High Court, the Legislative Assembly, Council, the Secretariat, and other departments are over INR 2400 crores. As it would take couple of years to build the designed government complex in Amaravati, the immediate need to shift the entire state administration from Hyderabad leads to the construction of an interim government complex in Velagapudi, a village in Thullur mandal in Guntur district. It is located on the Vijayawada-Amaravati route. Within a total area of 45,129 acres, 27,082 acres have been used to construct six two-storied buildings. The six buildings include legislature building, secretariat

and headquarters of government departments. The entire administration has been shifted from Hyderabad to Velagapudi, by 2017.

The interim government complex (figure:16) was built round the clock, using three



Figure 14: Interim government complex in Velagapudi

Source: Jain et al., 2018

eight-hour shifts, in 6 months. Left with no option to support their livelihood after giving their land for land pooling, most of the agricultural laborers joined the construction labor pool, making it easier for the government to find construction labor. Since there were no proper roads, while the major road is under construction, a single lane macadamized road was laid temporarily from Vijayawada to Velagapudi. Both sides of the single lane road are still covered with green fields where several families and farmers from nearby villages come and stand in front of the lands watching helplessly, while a man cycled by with an ice cream cart sell them refreshments. A village once known only for prime agricultural production and roads which hardly bore two-wheelers is now barricaded for security with checkpoints of Police battalions. The road up to the Velagapudi interim government complex is dressed up with rows of APCRDA flags on either side with the name Amaravati and Naidu's photo on it (figure:17).

Though the Secretariat has started functioning from the Interim Government Complex (IGC) at Velagapudi, there is no housing available for the 2,500 employees. They live in



Figure 17: Single lane road to Amaravati with Naidu's hoardings (billboards) on either side.

Vijayawada, Guntur, and Mangalagiri. Thus, many farmers have taken up auto rickshaw hiring as an alternative income-earning method and the autorickshaw has become the main means of transportation for the state employees. As mentioned in the previous section, autorickshaw



Figure 18: Beginnings of new road in Amaravati

Source: Romig, 2017

drivers advertise their telephone numbers to get clients.

In the meantime, the state government is in the process of constructing government housing complexes in Amaravati, with necessary social infrastructure including roads, schools, healthcare facilities, civic amenities and infrastructure (figure:18). Time will tell whether the

employees will move to Amaravati with only basic necessary infrastructure built for them. The outcome could be similar to Gandhinagar which could not attract the lawyers and judges to move to the capital of Gujarat and had to build the high court in Ahmedabad (Kalia, 1987).

Nonetheless, well known universities such as Sri Ramaswamy Memorial Institute of science and Technology (SRM) and Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) have already started their academic classes in Amaravati in semi-built structures, Amrita University has started construction in 2018. Also, Indo-UK Institute of Health Medicity 1,000-bed hospital and the National Institute of Design are expected to start their construction soon. However, there are rumors that investors and state institutions are taking a step back and are waiting for the results of next elections to start construction. The opposition parties are against the building of Amaravati and most people think that, if they win, Amaravati as planned may not materialize. Also, as the lack of funds delays construction for the designed city, people including those who volunteered their lands to land pooling are worried that the elections may put a stop to the new capital project. This would cause a huge loss for the land owners who got involved in the LPS.

In sum, an ultimate success of the capital would not only depend on its architectural forms and thousand years of vision but also depend on accommodation of present cultural practices and local lifestyles of people. This is a city that is planned from a distance through numbers, maps and images, overlooking the individuals, livelihoods, their desires and spaces. The dominant actors involved in the planning and development of Amaravati assumed their role as the agents of change who can ‘modernize’ the peasants. Trip to Singapore, land pooling schemes with social benefits like training younger generations were some of their practices to modernize them. As their career development provides both livelihoods and social status for a significant population across national boundaries (Perera, 2010). While the landowners and the existing settlers were considered as the recipients of better life in the

world class city with no agency or voice. In the planners' and politician's perspective they are the bodies that needs to be ordered and organized. Yet, the recipients successfully interpret and modify the norms within their local contexts that planners refuse to acknowledge which is already being followed in the existing settlements in the capital city area.

AMARAVATI: PEOPLE'S CONTESTATIONS

The world class city that is being created is a totally different reality from the world in which local people live. This gap has put enormous pressure on local people to transform into subjects of this new city which is almost impossible for them. The negotiation of an acceptable middle ground requires an effort of impossible proportions. People are also diverse; while some are encouraged by the project, others are not. As explained in the previous chapter, the APCRDA used land pooling scheme as a means of acquiring land for the capital city. Despite APCRDA and Naidu's claim that most people gave their lands voluntarily, few groups held out. This chapter focuses on these protesting groups and people who did not agree to give their lands to the capital city. This chapter attempts to understand the people's perspective towards the development in a local context, for not taking part in the capital project, and resistance.

The 74-year old Narayana, retired journalist and social activist from Vijayawada was probably the first person in Andhra Pradesh to raise his voice against Naidu's plan to create a 'world class' capital on the floodplains of Krishna River. He does not own any land in the proposed capital region but was concerned with the environmental aspects of the capital city project. He filed a case in high court with the intent of fighting all the way to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), stating that it comes under the earthquake-prone third seismic zone. Also, he argued that a black cotton soil which can support the growing of over 120 varieties of crops and yield at least three times a year is not good for heavy construction. These soils are unsuitable to carry heavy structures; this makes it difficult to sustainably build structures taller than two floors. Despite his age, illness and debt, he spent over INR 55 lakh on fighting this case at the NGT. He sold his land in Hyderabad to cover the expenses he occurred since February 2015, claiming that fertile land along the Krishna River is being

destroyed for urbanization (Tarafdar, 2017). However, in November 2017 NGT ruled in favour of the state government allowing the construction of the capital city.

While such social activists tried hard, protesting, and approaching the institutions of justice, used their agency and tactics, the farmers, especially the landowners, refused to hand over their lands to the government and continue farming (figure:19). Thus, the AP government relied heavily on using police as an instrument of coercion and intimidation



Figure 19: Land in Amaravati area that is yet to acquire

(Ramachandraiah, 2016). According to Romig's (2017) interview with a farmer, Rao, in the village, several battalions of police stationed themselves in the most recalcitrant villages to make their presence felt before the land pooling sign up deadline in late 2014. Also, to their surprise, several farm fields mysteriously caught fire and police

summoned the villagers for questioning about the arson. Instead of questioning about the arson, in the interrogation sessions that lasted until dawn, the police mostly asked why they were not handing over their land (Romig, 2017).

Despite many threats, about five percent of the farmers held out and tremendous pressure was brought on them. One of those villages was Nidamaru which is a major wholesale supplier of flowers to markets throughout Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Resistance to land pooling has been high in these river bank villages as they have the most fertile lands. According to the master plan this area is to be converted into Amaravati's electronic city, with information technology companies and computer chip manufacturers.

However, jasmine farmers like Vijayama are reluctant to give their lands to the state government. She employs around 300 local women as pluckers, who are in support with her in this resistance. These women are worried that the new city could not bring any new opportunities to them, except for urban jobs to work as maids or cleaners, which they wish to avoid. For Vijayama there is no compensation that can replace her 20 acres of land (Romig, 2017).

However, this is not the case in Dondapadu village where the land is dry and nearly not as productive as Nidamaru. An anonymous resident there who was struggling to live his life there had built a three-story building on the land he received from the land pooling scheme. Every former farmer in this village has expressed great happiness regarding the technique. Land pooling scheme has met little opposition in such villages.

Yet, the division of dry and wet lands by the APCRDA has also created problems in a few places. A landowner who owns wetland that borders the village of dryland is at stake. A few hundred farmers have been vocal against the pooling system based on this unruly division. One of them is the 59-year-old farmer Raja Reddy. Initially he wanted to pool his land but withdrew when the APCRDA classified it as dry land and offered him lower compensation than he expected. Reddy grows vegetables, paddy, Bengal gram, turmeric and bananas in his six acres of land and earns INR 1.5 lakh per month. Reddy argues in his own words: “Suppose I give my land and stop farming for 10-15 years, taking a INR 50,000 monthly compensation from the government. What if Amaravati never comes up, or what if the land prices don’t shoot up as they expect? I’ll be left with no income, and a small piece of land that is un fertile and undeveloped” (Mohan, 2017).

When an APCRDA official was questioned about these resistances, they replied with utmost confidence that the agency will definitely takeover the fields, leaving the farmers with no choice. As said, the Andhra Pradesh Assigned Lands Act (prohibition of transfers) was

enacted. That is, planners in the APCRDA has made sure that the farmers who held out their lands in resistance can no longer be sold or transferred to anyone, leaving the only option of surrendering them to APCRDA. Also, in 2016, Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (SPDCL) took the decision to snap all agriculture connections in the capital city area, but the on-field process started in 2017. According to the farmers, the removal of distribution and transmission relay (DTR) lines is their first measure to put an end to cultivation forcing the farmers to give up their lands to APCRDA. Yet, for now cultivation has not stopped in few places where there is still power.

In short, it is hard to gain much through protests if powerful actors possess the power to implement the projects and are determined to carry out (Perera, 2016). When people are involved in the negotiation of space, culture acts as a major factor besides the state, capital and economy. Amaravati is coming up on the land where the culture is deeply attached with agriculture. Most of the major holidays revolve around farming in the region, which the new city seeks to erase. This has been the culture that has evolved over a period of hundred years. For the farmers like Vijayama it is the only life they want. Although it is a miracle for the great mass of strugglers where the land is not very productive (dry land) like Dondapadu village, it is of a great distress to the *jareebu* productive land owners.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study shows that the planners of projects that claim to serve public health, safety and welfare have minimal knowledge of ordinary people's everyday activities and cultural practices and pays less attention to these. Amaravati never a unanimous idea. Like Chandigarh, some favoured the building of a new capital while others vigorously opposed and argued that it would destroy prime agricultural lands of the country. However, the ideology of the dominant political actor Naidu revealed the formal political power he held, but also overweighed the economic and social arguments of the oppositions.

Although, Naidu is respected for his enormous efforts in trying to bring about transformation, he is also criticized by local people for acquiring the lands through LPS, not considering the culture and the environment of the region. His frequent comparison of Amaravati to Singapore, which has little in common, is another aspect that is often criticized. Additionally, the LPS in Amaravati which is considered as the most successful of its kind in India has also created uncertainties and tensions even among those who willingly gave their lands and cooperated with the government due its delay in construction. Yet, irrespective of these criticisms Naidu is adamant in fulfilling the dream of Amaravati. Singapore's transformation from a fishing village to model a megalopolis within a generation is Naidu's inspiration. This kind of intention in mind, Naidu turned towards Singapore in planning the master plan of Amaravati.

The Singapore-based planners of the Amaravati project who have very little knowledge of everyday activities of ordinary people in India produced a township model that is far from local realities. The UK-based architects studied ancient monuments and famous places in the region with the intention of producing an environment that India can call its own. As a product of the processes of searching for India's own symbols and monuments and trying to bridge the gap between "ancient" and "modern", the designs for the high court resulted in a

combination of abstract Indian ancient-monuments. The concept of abstraction in the designs is highly preferred because it's the most valued in west and claims to represent the world neutrally (Prakash, 2002). However, the cultures that the architects studied and adopted in their designs were given the least importance by planners.

It is not wrong to get inspired from the other countries, especially the well to do ones, but one should not overlook the resources available in its local region produced by their own people. A great resource India is its agriculture and bustling bazaars that support livelihood of local people in the region which the development model does not consider. People in India are more used to eating food from road-side carts and buying fresh vegetables and fruits that sold on carts. Andhra Pradesh which is known as the food bowl of India has more such informal businesses which get produce directly from the farms. In Western countries, such



Figure 20: Informal space by local farmers in Vijayawada

foods are sold in farmers markets (*rythu bazaars* in India) which are much expensive than in big box stores. In Indian *rythu bazaars*, the produce is much cheaper than anywhere else. No matter how much they transform, such informal markets are the source for a wide-range of ordinary people.

Amaravati project is causing rapid urbanization in Vijayawada, resulting in more concrete apartment blocks and wide roads. Yet, people produce their lived spaces by carving

out room for their daily activities (figure. 20) which can be a subject for deeper study. Although Amaravati's planning model might be different from Vijayawada, the recipients who are going to live in the city have the same culture. As illustrated in chapter four, the farmers and agricultural labourers have already made up such informal businesses roadside on the way to Amaravati from Vijayawada. Thus, the capital city's planning resembles the initial situations of Jawahar Nagar and Chandigarh, which saw a dramatic change after completion.

In sum, this study is an attempt to convey the gap between Naidu's urban dreams which follows foreign ideals and conceptualized by foreign planners but contested and transformed by local people's lived processes. Amaravati is just not erasing the prime agricultural land but is also bringing drastic changes to the livelihoods of the farmers and agricultural labour. The formal spaces planned as per the master plan is thus an alienated space from the nature and people. However, in Chandigarh and Jawahar Nagar, people localize themselves, their activities, and spaces in one way or another. Understanding people's spaces requires us to pay attention to the "messy" spaces they produce (Perera, 2016). When planners refuse to acknowledge and incorporate these spaces in the system, such people will become beggars or burden to the society of which there is no of lack in India.

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